

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance



NODPA's Mission: *To enable organic dairy family farmers, situated across an extensive area, to have informed discussion about matters critical to the well being of the organic dairy industry as a whole. #*

NODPA Board

Liz Bawden, President, NY
Dave Johnson, Vice President, PA
Steve Morrison, Secretary, ME
George Wright, Treasurer, NY

Craig Russell, VT
Rick Segalla CT
Steve Kimball, NY
Steven Russell, ME
Morvan Allen, MA
Ed Zimba, MI
Bruce Drinkman, WI
Tony Azevedo, CA

State Reps:

Siobhan Griffin, NY
Arden Landis, PA
Aaron Bell, ME
John Gould, NY
John Stolzhus, NY
Dana Sgrecci, NY
Rodney Martin, VA
Roman Stolzfoos, PA
Jerome Walker, LA

Policy Committee

Kathie Arnold, NY
Steve Morrison

Executive Director

Ed Maltby

Newsletter and Web Editor

Lisa McCrory

Associate Editor and Event

Coordinator
Nora Owens

Position Statement on a proposed “Organic Research and Promotion Order”

NODPA supports a technical correction of the law that will allow split operations that produce “any agricultural commodity that is certified as “organic” or “100% organic” to be able to exempt their organically certified product from paying into any existing check-off programs.

We support the first section of the regulatory language proposed by the Organic Trade Association (OTA) that provides that correction:

“(e) EXEMPTION OF CERTIFIED ORGANIC PRODUCTS FROM ASSESSMENTS- (1) IN GENERAL- Notwithstanding any provision of a commodity promotion law, a person that produces, handles or markets organic products shall be exempt from the payment of an assessment under a commodity promotion law with respect to any agricultural commodity that is certified as “organic” or “100 percent organic” (as defined in Part 205 of Title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations).

“(2) SPLIT OPERATIONS- The exemption described in paragraph (e)(1) shall apply regardless of whether the agricultural commodity subject to the exemption is produced, handled or marketed by a person that also produces, handles or markets conventional or nonorganic agricultural products, including conventional or nonorganic agricultural products of the same agricultural commodity as that for which the exemption is claimed.

“(3) APPROVAL.—The Secretary shall approve the exemption of a person under subsection (e) if the person maintains a valid organic certificate issued under the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 6501 et seq.).

NODPA does not support extending authority or steps that would ultimately lead to a federal, USDA entity mandated, ‘Organic Research and Promotion Order’ with a governing committee appointed by the Agriculture Secretary. NODPA believes that any advantages of pooling check-off funds within the federal program will be outweighed by the restrictive guidelines, heavy bureaucracy, lack of accountability and cost of administration, a history of using check-off funds inappropriately and poor representation of farmer priorities in granting of research dollars.

NODPA believes that the organic community should rally behind the technical correction and then re-structure the conversation to look at other, perhaps better models that can be used to administer a pool of check-off money, that are less divisive to the whole organic community. NODPA members prefer to use their money and resources to support the many and various research and promotion efforts that are initiated by collective groups that represent their best interest, for example the Organic Valley FAFO program and OFRF. NODPA members believe that investing their check-off dollars in local and regional initiatives, as opposed to a mandated federal program, is better for organic family dairies and for the entire organic stakeholder community.

For further information please contact Ed Maltby or go to our website at www.nodpa.com